

react with increased competitiveness, desiring to maintain superiority. The much more compelling option, the option with which I am working and the option that also motivates my participation in this session, is to acknowledge responsibility for discriminatory practices and environments, work with women and men for better options for women, and contribute to the critique of masculinity and the male socialization process that contributes to discriminatory practices and environments. Fortunately, we will be supported in this second option through research like Skouholt's (1978), scholarly responses like that of Jardine and Smith (1987), and professional organizations like the National Organization for Changing Men (NOCM) which sponsors conferences and symposia on the topic.

Footnote

1 It is also important to note that there are also few people of color and other minority group members among the Convention guest speakers.

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A MODERNITY-POSTMODERNITY DIALECTIC ON MEN IN FEMINISM

KAREN A. HAMBLIN

In my discussion of men in feminism, I will focus on this topic in terms of art educators employed in higher education. My comments are based on the assumption that feminism and its attendant values, attitudes, and behaviors are seen as something that men, in some way, react to, adjust to, or, just plainly, take into consideration at this time in history. An ostensibly neutral stance is not possible - ignoring feminism is itself charged with value judgments. Questions, however, arise as to how an optimum state of sex equity and gender consciousness might occur and what relationships men would have toward feminism given the current character of academia and, specifically, of art education faculties. I will use the terms *adaptive*, *separatist*, and *androgynous* as descriptors of how women relate to male-dominated academia. Conversely, these same descriptors also provide perspectives on how men relate, or could relate, to feminism.

In an *adaptive* approach, women attempt to be more like men in their professional behaviors, attitudes, and values, and, by acquiring such characteristics, women accept recognition for achievements commensurate with those of their male colleagues. In the *adaptive* relationship, women try to buy into the patriarchal system of hierarchical power and decision-making - to a great extent this is what women in higher education have traditionally tried to do (Rush, 1987). The second relationship, *separatist*, exists when women develop their own community of feminist values, attitudes, and behaviors, and work toward getting the administrative hierarchy to consider feminist issues and values as legitimate in their own right. Needless to say, women who have ignored or directly confronted the system in this manner have met with less than optimum success. For example, women who have attempted to receive tenure on the basis of classroom teaching and community service can readily attest to the lack of recognition given to such so-called female activities. A *separatist* approach does not mean equal consideration. The third way in which women relate to male domination in higher education is through the integration of feminist values with the most desirable values of traditional patriarchies. The results are assumed to be the best of the two worlds of male and female and has been considered *androgynous* in nature (Collins, 1977).

Adaptive Approach of Men to Feminism

The adaptive approach, wherein feminism would constitute the operative system, appears to be preferable from a feminist viewpoint. If men were required to adapt to feminism, this would constitute a so-called

paradigm switch from hierarchical, individualistic power relationships to a communal sharing of decision-making options. This appears to be an attractive alternative to patriarchal modernism, and it has been couched in terms of a change in world views.

An adaptive approach may go beyond feminism *per se* to an embrace of postmodernist ecological sensitivity, social pluralism, and collectivism. Parallels between feminism and postmodernism are fairly obvious. There are, however, differences that quickly become evident when examined in lived experiences. Postmodernism does not, *ipso facto*, grant sex equity. The high contextual specificity of postmodernism is all-too-evident in "Good Old Boy Networks." In-crowd, male sources of departmental and higher echelon decision-making at universities are very much based on tradition, personal contacts, and nonrationalized (and nonpublic) actions. Decision-making and the distributions of power and recognition is nonpublic and nonlegalized. As many to-be-tenured women can attest, it is in the high context, personalized enclaves of informal (and nearly invisible) networking that professional decisions are made.

An adaptive relationship also portends the very real danger that men will co-opt feminism. Feminism, in some academic circles, has become an intellectual commodity, wherein feminism takes the form of an intellectual exercise that only finds public expression in journal articles, books, conference presentations, and other traditionally rationalized formats. In this sense, it is very possible that men could come to control definition and directions of feminism. Men are in key positions to influence the shape of feminism that will be given academic credence.

Separatist Approach of Men to Feminism

The separatist approach offers little towards the movement of men in feminism. Separatism allows men to ignore feminist concerns. Women in art education can contribute to the develop of programs, serve on umpteen committees, counsel students, create their own art work - and receive little recognition for their activities. Since university structures are built along the lines of male hierarchy, and merit is given for conformity to its values, a separatist approach by men to feminism only reifies the status quo.

Androgynous Approaches to Men to Feminism

A combination approach to feminism, wherein there is, to use Collin's (1977) term, an androgynous model for professional action, appears to be the most viable option, among the three relationships of men to feminism discussed in this paper. Androgynous art education university professionals would encompass the best of the male and female worlds, and decisions would be made on the basis of mutual benefit and equity.

Unfortunately, in a sense, we already have a distorted androgynous model in place at this time, with the characteristics of high context decision-making now used to obscure where power resides, and rationalizing processes used to subjugate women and distance them from meaningful

input. We have, in effect, an androgynous model that is schizophrenic, with women never sure whether feminist values or male domination rules are operative.

Summary

One needs to assess whether feminism is used as an intellectual rallying point or whether it is part of lived decision-making. Feminism, as an intellectual exercise, can be clothed in the obscure and alienating language of the academic and of the published research article which do little to change the lived realities of the female art educator. In many respects, feminism itself has become rationalized and objectified in entering the arena of academia, and it could easily become part of contextualized networking that excludes women from participation. Also, men in feminism portends the very real danger that men are being looked to for validation. Women could become disenfranchised from how feminism is defined and interpreted in academic settings. Since men have usually acted as administrative and intellectual leaders, a natural extension of their power could be to co-opt feminism, or, at the least, the outward trappings by espousing feminism through publication, conference presentation, etc.

Will men in art education academia ever be perceived as successful to the extent that they embody feminism? The answer to this, I believe, is that feminism will be prized and legitimated in academia to the extent that a new world is legitimated. Postmodernism offers some incentives for a sharing of power that extends beyond the specific concerns of feminism to include democratic participation, cultural pluralism, ecological responsibility, validating nonrationalistic modes of knowledge, a cherishing of tradition. However, a gender equitable situation requires that aspects of both modernity and postmodernity are validated. The rationalizing processes so dear to modernity and patriarchal hierarchies provide the legislation for equal opportunities. Rationalizing processes bring in outsiders and outside scrutiny to the politicized processes of university decision-making. For example, it has often been the rationalizing processes of legal mandate and formal guidelines that have come to the aid of women employed at universities. It is unfortunate, but equal treatment and equality of opportunity must be legislated.

In curing some of the ills of male domination and modernity rationalism, feminism should not be considered as a panacea or as immune to its own particular set of misinterpretations, abuses, and misuses. The less desirable characteristics of high context values and of post modernity have always been present in university / departmental politics, and they need to be considered in any attempt to promote feminism on the coattails of postmodernity. Moreover, as postmodernity values begin to infiltrate into university power structures and decision-making, it is highly possible that feminist issues *per se* will be obscured. For men to be in feminism and for feminism to be an active part of art educators' professional lives, new definitions and configurations of power will need to be operative - configuration that encompass some of the safeguards provided by current rationalizing processes, as well as some of the pluralistic decision-sharing that postmodernity promises.

A Personal Addendum

At various conferences, when my mind begins to wonder, I often contemplate how individual women would be regarded if they took on the characteristics of some of our male leaders/speakers. What would happen to individual women who would take on commonly accepted male mannerisms of arrogance, abrasiveness, and conceit? Men in feminism raises the converse imaging of how men would appear in the world view of feminism. That requires much less of a stretch of one's imagination.

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FEMINISM AS METAPHOR

AMY BROOK SNIDER

When I was first invited to be on a panel discussing "Men in Feminism," my only thoughts on the topic were, "Sure, we need men in feminism. Feminism is a way of looking at the world, so why not!" But then I continued to myself, how could I be a spokeswoman for men? Maybe only men are in a position to talk about the subject. Perhaps if I read the book, *Men in Feminism*, the selection of presentations from two sessions of an MLA Conference in 1984 which inspired this panel, I'd have more to say about the topic... I did have more to say, although it was not at all what I had expected.

I had an immediate reaction to this sampling of feminist literary criticism. These essays were about feminism, but the style and syntax of the language and the insular nature of the discussions seemed inconsistent with feminist values. It was difficult to get to the question of men in this (un)familiar and (un)feminist forum.

My ideas about feminism were shaped during the early 1970's, in one of the consciousness-raising groups spawned by the Women's Liberation Movement. The values which shaped, in some measure, the content and structure of our meetings have been delineated by Kathleen Weiler in her recent book, *Woman teaching for change: Gender, class and power* (1988) as:

an emphasis on lived experience and significance of everyday life. This is expressed in several different ways: by an assertion that the personal is political; by a rejection of positivism and an interest in phenomenological or social interactionist approaches; by a new definition of the relationship between woman researcher and woman subject (pp. 58-59).

The values which have come to be identified with feminism are certainly not new nor restricted to women. They define a way of being in the world - a way of thinking, seeing, understanding, writing, working, and so forth. I contrasted my understanding of feminism with a typical message from *Men in Feminism* (Heath, 1987, p. 27) which made me feel like Alice listening to the White Rabbit recite the nonsense poem as evidence during her trial. It was as if I had to stand on my head to penetrate the dense thicket of its verbiage. The sentences are long and convoluted with punctuation playing a major role in the communication of ideas. Certain code words laden with hidden meanings, are accessible only after a thorough grounding in the work of other literary theorists.